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Poems  
of  
Youthful Bands

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“A good book is the precious life blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life.”—MILTON.





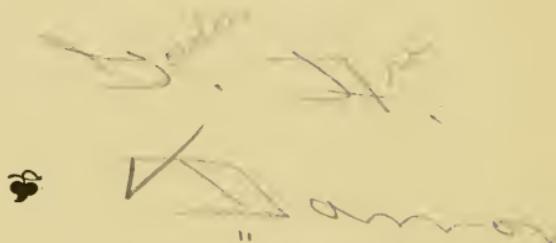


POEMS  
OF  
A YOUTHFUL BARD

WITH PREFATORY AND  
EXPLANATORY NOTES

BY

AUTHOR



"Truth, Magnanimity, Perfection."



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1895

COPYRIGHT, 1895,  
BY  
GORDON A. DAMON.

OUT OF RESPECT FOR AND APPRECIATION OF  
HIS PATERNAL LOVE,

AND

FOR HIS AID

IN

PROCURING THE PUBLICATION OF THIS,

MY FIRST WORK,

IS THE SAME MOST SINCERELY

*Dedicated*

TO

MY FATHER.



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## PREFACE.

---

THE present volume is a compilation of a collection of youthful poems of “school-boy” days, composed in my fifteenth year,—1895. They are, for the most part, the results of study of and communion with external nature. In them I strive to bring out the love, the beauty, the grandeur, and even the intellect (?) characteristic of this queen of queens ; this goddess administering to the wants of a tired earth ; caressing it, and invoking a blessing on its welfare.

To me there is something distinct, apart from the inanimate in external nature. There is something human and divine. What wonder that some of the ancient peoples worshipped her forms? Surely, God inspires them with life, and has placed His image in them. I think she should be addressed and reverenced even as are the distinguished personages of this plain. We should search for her truths in the deep-delved earth ; in the remote and obscure recesses of the woods and rocks,—

“ Find tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,  
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.”

In placing the work before the public, I wish to ask its pardon ; and when struck with the inconsistency and un-

ripeness, as may occur frequently, to bear in mind the conditions and the author.

As to “The Bird’s Obituary,” you must excuse me for writing on so trivial affairs. Byron has said,—

“ The puny school-boy and his early lay  
Men pardon if his follies pass away.”

In the poems I have aimed towards originality ; but, of course, as all authors have done, and probably always will, I have received ideas from other works, although I trust word-for-word quotations are infrequent. Plagiarism is a thing to be avoided. I think I have brought out something new ; my friends are to vouch for it.

“ Read not to contradict and confute ;  
. . . but to weigh and consider.”

This volume may be subject to severe criticism, and it may not. Whatever be the case, the result will only serve as an incentive to a nobler object.

It may not receive the public favor. Byron, Shelley, Keats, Wordsworth, and a host of others, met with opposition and discouragement in their early years, but did that check their progress ? Keats, although conceded to be an inferior and youthful writer, has promise in his works. There is promise in them which seems to portend the greatness of the soul back of it ; and, had his life been spared, he would have doubtless astonished the world with his sensuousness.

Sometimes “a sharp criticism that has a drop of witty

venom in it stings a young author almost to death," but if this volume meets with such, providing it is worth criticising, I will do my best to survive. Braveness and magnanimity (that property which enables one "to encounter danger and trouble with tranquillity and firmness, which raises the possessor above revenge and prompts him to act and sacrifice for noble objects") are things invaluable in this world. Byron was brave when he attacked the "Scotch Reviewers," but his was braveness with malice in it; braveness of hostility; braveness without magnanimity. "Calamity is man's true touchstone;" or, in other words, the first failure is the first step to success. How often has this been demonstrated!

In conclusion, I am sure my friends will find nothing in the poems either impure or debasing. I trust the thought in every case descends no lower than nobility. Wordsworth has wisely said,—

"Learn by a mortal yearning to ascend  
Toward a higher object."

This expresses an ideal. That object is perfection. And as this volume passes out of the press with all its faults and all its gems (?), I promise you something better in the future.

Respectfully yours,

GORDON A. DAMON.

MILLINGTON, MICHIGAN, July 8, 1895.



## INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

---

WE look forward to a future "Golden Age," as it were ; to an age of peace, happiness, and contentment ; to an age when there will be something in reality to live for other than individual supremacy ; to an age when strife in all its various branches shall be obliterated, when mankind shall enjoy the highest good, and realize heaven upon the earth. We, no doubt, will not see it, but we trust posterity will. Can we not do otherwise than merely deem this age a myth of the past ? When man's intellect is sufficiently developed and his eyes are open to the proper light of things, then shall he realize the change.

"Fantasia" is thoroughly a child of fancy.



POEMS  
OF  
A YOUTHFUL BARD.

---

FANTASIA: A VISION OF THE FUTURE.

PART I.

BLUE skies in glory beamed above,  
And clouds, the breath of summer, decked  
The vault thus formed with silver seas,  
Which glistened as the sun shone through  
The rifts and ripples of its morning tide.  
A breeze bestirred itself that morn,  
And as it passed o'er blooming fields  
And meadows, pleasant lakes and streams,  
It gathered in its bosom breath  
Of flowers, elysian born, which bowed  
Their heads in reverence to the God  
Who made them, and who gave them grace  
To cheer the hearts of mortals here below.

A cataract, hard by, sent up  
A tune to heaven as it moved  
O'er rocks and crags, and thundered down  
The steep, with Nature as its guide,  
Who led the way through curious rocks  
And deep ravines, and through the caves  
And crevices along its path.  
Now here, now there, now darting to  
And fro as if in play, but on  
And on forever to the sea ;  
To sink into its bosom, thence  
To rise unseen, and seek once more  
The cataract from whence it sprung ;  
To fall, but soon to rise again.  
The trees, the shrubs, the scandent stems,  
And herbs sent up a vigorous growth,  
And graced a landscape, which, in blend  
And form, surpassed by far, of art,  
The instruments and skill which man e'er caught,  
And put to flight his puny masterpiece.  
And emulous nature all around,  
Beast, bird and insect,—all the forms  
Of life,—anon put forth their best  
In effort to succeed and bring forth joy.  
Alburnus rested neath an elm

That, in the wisdom of its growth,  
Had spread itself abroad and formed  
A blest retreat from weary hours  
Of toil. Here oft he sat and lisped  
Unto himself the thoughts that rushed  
In quick succession through his brain ;  
But on this morn of brighter mood  
He seemed, and wandering far away  
Were all his thoughts ; and as the breeze  
Came stealing o'er his verdurous couch,  
Bearing its fragrant burthen in its breast ;  
And as he gazed upon the sky  
And silvery clouds above, he seemed  
To fade away : then, lulled to rest,  
And charmed by aerial scenes, to be  
Absorbed, and soon fell fast asleep.

## PART II.

Now o'er the landscape changeling sped  
His spirit free, and o'er the verge  
To dreamland. On he sped until  
He wandered in elysium,  
Among interminable paths and tufts  
Of emerald. Beauties greeted him

Which, to the mortal eye so gross,  
Were inconceivable. On he passed  
In sweetest meditation. Thoughts  
Of future ages wandered each  
O'er each in blest profusion through  
His new-born, heavenly intellect.  
Inspired ! The very thoughts put on  
New forms,—anon uprose before  
His transfix'd gaze stupendous forms,  
And towers of adamant, and vast  
Arenas bearing crimson lengths,  
Which hung as veils encircling all.

Colossus, like Alburnus, stood  
Immovable in the maze around.  
He gazed, but still perplexed,—o'ercome  
With charms so striking, yet unsought.

As thus he stood, there seemed a voice  
From out the vaporous clouds to say,—  
“ Go forth, Alburnus. Stay not here  
And waste thy precious hours in gaze  
And idleness ; but haste thee, haste  
To that mysterious realm, and seek  
Thy wisdom in its garnished halls  
And o'er its plains ; haste, haste thee, son.”

Bestirred Alburnus when the voice  
Had ceased, and then with hastened step  
Moved on the scene anon,—  
Advanced, and thus addressed the Queen,—

“Oh, thou mysterious Future, in thy realms  
Of unborn glories, hidden force and power,  
Phenomena, which, man’s prophecy, o'er-  
whelms,  
And vast achievements,—meek Ambition’s  
tower,—

    Oh, lift thy veil.

“Aye, condescend to lead me through thy ways,  
And teach me all the wisdom thou must know;  
Oh, guide me, teach me, and thy sight repays  
My yearnings, as the lover to the beau  
    Doth satisfy.

“Lift, lift the shroud that now surrounds, ob-  
scures thee,  
And satisfy mine hungering soul with lore.  
Mine eyes, oh, look, and penetrate the sea  
Of crimson thou dost now behold,—adore,  
    And lead me on.”

Vanished the curtains, and his sight  
Beheld the spectacle of his dream,—  
Her Majesty, clad in robes the breath  
Of gold, the essence of its worth,  
Who stood as guardian o'er the realm  
And o'er the fancy of her guest.

He spake not, more,—the Queen had heard ;  
He read the answer in her eye ;  
His heart enthralled, the sight o'ercome,  
He scarce could wait the Queen's reply,—  
“ Welcome, thou changeling ; follow me.”  
As doth the magnet rule the steel  
So didst the Queen Alburnus rule ;  
So didst her bearing catch his mind,  
And drew his feet anon with her.

Behold ! Oh, what doth greet him now ?  
What wondrous forms ! What shapely forms !  
What genius blazoned all around !  
What cressets of ingenious lore !  
What superhuman feats entombed  
In human casements ! Strength and power  
Of mighty rulers yet unborn !  
What sights and mysteries unfold !  
Now musing pensively, and now

Casting his wanton eye abroad,  
Alburnus, conscious of the Queen  
And conscious of the state, exclaimed,—  
“ How wonderful are the works of God !  
And man, the noblest in the scale,  
How lofty his ambition, and  
How stern the motives of the soul !”  
“ O God, didst thou inspire these works ?  
Was’t with thy skill he wrought the stone ?  
Is’t with thy power such massive forms  
Rise up before the startled morn ? ” \*  
Now on the right and on the left  
Great halls burst forth,—arched entrances,  
To coy the child † and lead him on.  
He moved. What alien marvels rear ! ‡  
Here sits stern Justice on the throne.  
Here Education crowns each head.  
Here Science thrives, and Wisdom fraughts

---

\* Startled morn is a metaphor used to express the brilliancy with which the sun is supposed to have burst forth and sent its rays over the landscape in streams of liquid gold.

† His intellect was as a child’s in this new realm.

‡ Rear in this position means a springing up, a springing into existence.

All civil\* hearts, and sends the waves  
Of thought throughout the public air.  
Here Argon and the electrics fade,  
And give the place to higher forms.  
Here stately vehicles relieve  
The breath of horses past and gone.  
Now fade the implements of war.  
No bloody strife infects the creeds.  
No party contest marks the years.  
No ignorance, no theft, no vice,  
No vile submission of the poor,  
But all in one "harmonious whole,"—  
The brotherhood of man,—the age  
Of wealth, of reason, and of lore.

Dimly yet surely through the arch  
Of tangled vistas shines a star,  
The cynosure of all. He moved,  
And hastened more each step, each pace.  
"Perfection! Ah, deceitful star!  
Thou *ignis fatuus* of the realms!  
Canst thou not hold for man's desires?

---

\* Civil hearts refers to men in the service of the country, the government; really, a politician. *Hearts* is a metonymy.

Wilt thou not now receive his prayer?"  
Alburnus mused. Now faint, now light,  
Then bursting forth in one vast glare,  
The beams o'erpowered his manly frame,—  
Awoke his fancy with a start.

"O God," he said, "grant me once more  
A sight of the future; grant, oh, grant.  
Perfection, ever in the eye,  
Anon remains the thing before.  
Man strives in vain to reach its heights,  
But falls ere he has scaled the top."

## POSTSCRIPT.

Thus on a time Alburnus, 'neath the elm,  
Dreamt of the Future and its wondrous forms.  
Now oft he strays to that same cosy spot,  
To seek once more a vision of the realms,  
But all to naught. Hope "never spreads her  
wings;"  
'Tis action brings the soul its highest bliss.\*

June, 1895.

---

\* Hoping for that age is of no avail.

## HYMN TO MUSIC.\*

COME, holy mother, come and cheer thy son ;  
And from thy founts of pure delight and love,  
In thine eternal resting-place above,  
Pour forth a draught of pleasure thou hast  
won.

Stir old Timotheus with thy magic hand ;  
Attune his lyre to move one's inmost soul ;  
Present thy choir, for we will ask no toll ;  
Proclaim the nation's peace throughout the  
land.

Come from thy haunts wherein such pleasure  
lies ;  
Set me afloat upon elysian seas,  
And cease not till mine hung'ring doth ap-  
pease ;  
Oh ! fill my soul with thine own rhapsodies.

---

\* This was written while in a melancholy mood, and at a time when out of music study.—AUTHOR.

## TO A BIRD IN A CAGE.

First published poem.

OH, prisoner, in behind those slender bars  
Of ductile steel, inclosed within a world  
Whose metes and bounds so narrow seem to  
    us ;

Say, dost thou live and still enjoy thy fare  
Of hemp and earth-brewed ale, with but a bone  
From some poor fish on which to whet thy  
    bill ?

While out of doors thy winged sisters glide  
On supple wing, through fields and meadows  
    fair

With blooming flora in its varied forms,  
Through country, town, or great metropolis ;  
Through grove and dale, or perched on the  
    bough

Of genial tree or shrub, to catch their prey,  
Or warble forth a descant to the winds ?

Say, art thou happy in thy solitude,  
With naught but puny house-plant underneath  
For contrast with the wainscot, sill, or wall ;

And bulky plaster canopy above,  
To hide from view God's fair external shroud?

Art thou content to thus remain in-doors  
In pent-up cell, exempt from Nature's bounds  
Of infinite glory; and suffice with view  
Of landscape through the panes of lucid glass;  
While at thy side in beauteous brotherhood,  
Thy winged mate in similar grievance hangs  
Suspended with his cage, from lengths of  
wire?

So this thy lot has fate destined to be,  
A prisoner yet unknown to freedom's will.  
Farewell, oh, lovely bird, oh, type of love!  
Continue in thy praise of Joy divine.  
And when the shades of evening softly steal  
O'er cot and vale, may rest thy eyelids seek;  
And when beneath thy wing thy head is laid  
"May peace be with thee," is my silent prayer.  
May thine be pleasant dreams 'til morning  
sun

Sheds forth his welcome rays o'er eastern hills.  
Farewell! Farewell!

March, 1895.

## THE BIRD'S OBITUARY.

Sequel to "To a Bird in a Cage."

OH, innocence ! My innocence !  
That thou shouldst meet thy fate  
In this cruel manner, sad to tell,  
Oh, why should I relate ?

Sweet freedom's air meant death to thee,  
I heard thy requiem sigh  
Through grass and limb, I knew't meant death,  
'Twas in the feline eye.

I saw the death-trap opened wide ;  
I saw thee in the tree ;  
A glance soon caught thy downward flight ;  
The worst was yet to be.

The stealthy cat,—blood-thirsty wretch,—  
Alert for this gay fare,  
Sprang swiftly towards the charmed prey,  
Despite my threats and care.

The end had come. The act was done,—  
A pace she quick flew o'er,  
And darted underneath the manse,  
My pet was seen no more.

Oh, pretty bird ! Oh, lovely bird !  
Thy song oft stirred my heart ;  
Without thee life is not complete ;  
Why are we torn apart ?

A bard doth love such noble forms  
As thee and thy sweet mates ;  
Thy memory often moves his pen,  
And soul and mind inflates.

Thou wert content within thy cell ;  
No care of life had thee ;  
But bush and tree proved danger's trap,  
Which thou wert wont to see.

Thy feathery coat, and corpulent crop !  
How dainty in the sight  
Of crouching cat !—a leap, a bound,  
I scarce could trace his flight.

Say, wast thou conscious of the ire  
With which I whipped the thing  
For this adroit carnal feat  
On thy soft breast and wing?

But why should I thus blame poor puss?  
'Tis instinct,—nothing more;  
As natural for a cat to kill  
As waves to dash on shore.

A man craves flesh and so does brute;  
How closely they're allied!  
'Tis flesh on flesh, and blood on blood,  
And both are satisfied.

But when one's pet is captured thus  
To serve a luxurious meal,  
One's common sense is quick reversed,  
And wrath allowed to steal.

The cage (where thou wert caused to dwell)  
Hangs empty, silent, still;  
No more sweet notes pour gayly forth  
In mingled, transient trill,

No more I hear thy tender call ;  
No more thy rustling wing ;  
I see thee not atilt on perch ;  
How strange thy mate doth sing !

The cage hangs empty,—thou art gone,  
And lonely is thy mate ;  
And when I'm moved to write these lines,  
How can I hesitate ?

I loved thee, but I loved too well ;  
Fate cut in twain the tie ;  
Thy memory'll ever leave a trace ;  
Recurring, leave a sigh.

April, 1895.

## SONNET.

To an Unknown Friend.

NOTE.—These lines were inspired by a spontaneous friendship arising through poems of a contemporary, occurring occasionally in *The Detroit Journal* as specimens of Michigan verse.—AUTHOR.

WHAT noble friendships from vague sources  
spring !

What unions brief epistles often bring ;  
What ties may often bind a kindred heart  
With one of likeness, although far apart !  
And, if the winged poesy has inspired  
A union thus (as I have so desired),  
Then God ordain, for we are satisfied,  
And God forbid that such can be denied.  
Our faces are, as yet, unknown to each ;  
But hearts.—We trust, no skill of man can teach  
A dearer language than the human breast,  
At once the giver and the thing carest ;

At once the thing that finds us here on earth ;  
And, too, the secret of our heavenly birth.\*

---

\* If a man is of a kindly and loving nature, in sympathy with his kind, extending it to those about him and around him, and respecting that which is right and just, he is said to be "good-hearted," a term expressive of a quality of the human breast, which, in reality, is a property of the intellect. "The secret of our heavenly birth" implies that one of this sort is welcome in the sight of God.

## TRUTH.\*

NATURE! How vast her bounds, and peerless  
Truth

The solvent of her problems all, —aye, Truth!  
It stands alone, search as we may and long,  
For likeness in the labyrinthine cells  
Of Nature's most remote and obscure halls.  
'Tis not as rock,—geology tells us no,—  
For e'en the concrete silica must yield  
Before the potent agencies of flame,  
And veer from compact clod to molten stream.  
Unlike the diamond? Yes, for e'en this gem,  
This piece of adamant, is but a fraud,  
But evanescence—that is all—compressed  
By some strange law of Nature long ago.

---

\* Truth is my religion. Truth, in my opinion, is the search-light of all the investigations of science. That is what we are striving for; let us search for it in the life-book of Nature; in the vast resources of the earth and air.—AUTHOR.

A fraud, I say, because when 'neath the spell  
Of an electric, the scintillations cease,  
And it becomes a tintless vapor. Nay,  
Not like the gem in this respect is Truth,  
But, oh, how similar in brilliancy !  
Yea, e'en surpasses it. This is not all  
(How different and yet how similar are the  
two !)

The diamond is a stranger to some men,  
And so is Truth ; to some there is a veil,  
The veil of unostentation one ; the screen  
Of Truth, one placed there by the faltering  
hand

Of Error, Error ! Who can this deny ?  
This cruel, fallacious sophiste. Oh, that she  
Might be forever banished from men's sight,  
And her dim and wavering beacon on the  
sands

And shoals in life's great, heaving sea, de-  
stroyed.

Nevermore to conjure innocent souls.  
O Fate ! destroy her signal ; build a new,  
And found it on a rock which will never fall.  
May't be Truth's brilliant cresset ; may its rays,  
United, shine, enlightening shore to shore.

## TO A RAINBOW.

How fair thy form  
As o'er the distant sky thou blendest !  
And sending far thy mighty arm,  
In grace thou bendest.

How fair to sight,  
As to thy vap'rous vault above  
The skylark, fearless of his flight,  
Swiftly doth move !

How doth he sail,  
This pilgrim of the air ! This form  
Emblazoned on the ephemeral veil,—  
The fading swarm

Of silvery clouds,  
Now dying with declining day,  
Wrapped in the invisible shroud  
Of sheer decay !

Vainly the brush  
Might rudely trace thee on the board,  
But skill e'er fails ; and thou dost crush  
As doth the sword

Man's feeble power ;  
And thou dost steal away his charm ;\*  
But thou dost sympathy embower,  
And guide his arm.

Thou givest him thoughts,  
But roughly dons the paint, and coarse  
The workmanship. No softness fraughts,  
As in thy force.

Alas, farewell !  
Already dost thou fade, and leavest  
Thy loved companion,† yet farewell.  
Thy memory cleavest.

July 19, 1895.

---

\* It irresistibly wins our admiration by the remarkable softness of its tone, thereby lessening the charm of the bow of the artist ; but it gives to the latter an inspiration and prompts him to his best, which is but rude and rough in comparison.

† The rainbow being double, on the disappearance of one part the other is left alone.

## EPISTLE TO A DEAR FRIEND.

Lines on the Departure of my Friend and Tutor,  
A. E. Wilber.

So friends must part?  
But fate must have his way. We have been  
friends,  
Yes, truest friends, indeed. The tie that  
bound  
Our sympathies and love has ne'er been cut in  
twain,  
And God forbid that such may ever be.  
Not by thy hand (?), surely not by mine,  
Will it be severed, well we know ourselves,  
But, needs be such the case, by one un-  
known.

What bond more sacred than sweet Friend-  
ship's tie !  
What grief more heartfelt than the parting  
sigh !

What deep regret in soul-made farewell tears  
Of hopeful youth or wiser elder years !  
The suffering and the sorrow of the soul ;  
The trespassing, the death-bed, and the goal !  
All these are represented on the stage  
Of life, and stamped on Fate's mysterious  
page.

Yea, all mankind must harbor such as these,  
Despite gay thoughts of comfort, joy, and  
ease.

The poor, the rich, the meek, the proud, the  
brave ;

The workman, monarch, Christian, fop, the  
grave ;

The fool, the vagabond, and vagrant thief ;

The genius, artist, bard, and social chief ;

The pensive, clever, florid, and secure,—

Yea, all of these, and yet how many more !

So comes the tide when we must say fare-  
well.

Aye, sad, indeed, the word, like vesper bell  
When good Apollo lays himself to rest,  
Comes breathing on mine ear and stirs my  
breast.

Farewell? Ah! darkling comes that parting word,

Borne not on tinted wings of tell-tale bird,  
But on thy own, thy own, thy faltering lips.

Its hungered burthen of my spirit sips.

Farewell! for soon we lisp and drift apart,  
And each leave golden memories on each heart.

We trust 'tis not forever; nay, much less;  
But may omnipotent Fate our union bless.  
And with his wand, when thou art gone away,  
With many a pass and indivisible stay,  
This bond of friendship! may he bind it strong!

All this, I trust, he'll do, and not do wrong.

So thou dost go? May joy be ever thine,  
And in Minerva's lap may thou recline.  
May Wisdom's crest, beset with adamant,  
Thy future efforts crown,—may naught supplant,—

And like the unseen power above, that guides  
Man's feeble hand and stirs the ponderous tides

Of destiny, thy footsteps may she note,  
And thus divert thee from the treacherous  
moat.\*

---

\* Man is a scheming genius. Scheming is all right in its place,—if we scheme to a good purpose, if the results are going to benefit mankind. But there are too many in this world who, in their scheming after wealth and fame, even resort to falsehood, and thus sometimes get a fellow-creature “in a boat,” to use the colloquial phrase. A man who thinks he is moving in the right path may be led to his downfall by the *ignis fatuus* of some treacherous speculator. Therefore he must be on guard.—AUTHOR.

## ODE TO THE SOUTH WIND.\*

THOU unseen zephyr from some distant clime,  
Bowed down with fragrance from thy  
mother's breast,

Frolicking with Aurora in her prime,  
And kissing the earth, which thou hast oft  
carest;

Whither dost thou go? Where's thy re-  
treat,—thy nest?

Art thou from heaven? Wast thou born of God?  
Has thy soft feet e'er trod those glittering  
spheres?

Or is earth thy mother? forever hast thou trod  
O'er the inglorious plain where heaven ne'er  
appears?

This universal death-bed and this vale of  
tears.

---

\* This "Ode" was suggested by the hopeful, inspiring zephyrs of glorious May. To the author it is even passionate, and I do not feel satisfied until I have sung its praise.

But hence. Sweet zephyr, come dispel such cares.

Bring joy with thee ; vain sorrow must depart,

For flowers appear despite a field of tares,  
And thus leave gems with which to cheer  
the heart.

Thou unseen zephyr, come, disperse such cares athwart.

Welcome, sweet zephyr, from thy couch above,  
The breath of heaven moves thy immortal wings ;

Thou art the image of God's fearful love,  
As are the lords the breath of potent kings ;  
The eternal goddess fair, admonishing  
heavenly things.

Thou hast a message from Apollo's breast,  
And to the mother nature dost thou move  
To bear its burthen to her teeming crest ;  
And so bring forth her smiles as those  
above,  
Inflate her soul with thine, and fill her with  
thy love.

The vigorous trees thou hast inspired with  
song,

And ever, in their own monotonous lay,  
They murmur to themselves and to the throng  
That plods along the well-worn public way,  
Till good Apollo bids farewell to parting  
day.

E'en as the songsters poureth in full heart,  
Gay strains of love upon a tired earth,  
To charm with all the skill of unlearned art,  
And soothe dull care with praise of graceful  
mirth ;  
We feel thou art its theme,—the prompter  
of his birth.

May, 1895.

## GOD.

“OH thou Eternal One !”  
Thy mighty presence here,  
Although unseen among  
Us, brings to us the thoughts  
Of master intellect  
In realms beyond the grave ;  
Thoughts of the maker  
Of this universe ;  
Thoughts of the one who guides  
The ships through trackless depths ;  
Thoughts of the one who stirs  
    The tides of destiny ;  
And guides man’s hand, and thus  
Inspires the frailty of  
His feeble intellect ;  
And fills his hung’ring soul  
With love and light ; and gives  
Him power to raise mankind  
To higher levels in  
    The silver spheres of Truth :

Thoughts of the one who gives  
Life unto earth, and fills  
The heart of nature full  
With animation ; prompts  
Her beings on life's path  
To strive for higher things  
Than earthly goals. We feel  
Thy presence in the wood,  
The stream, and depths of air.  
And as we move at morn  
Or evening to the haunts  
In shady forest hearts ;  
Or to her blest resorts,—  
The caves in deep-delved earth,—  
Apart from care and strife  
Of routine worlds, to seek  
Communion with her forms,  
And solve her mysteries ;  
We feel thy breath,  
Thy presence, and thy love,  
Thy whisper all around  
That lisps thy truths, and binds  
Our hearts to thee. Thou bring'st  
To us the thoughts of this  
Vast universe ; and lead'st

Our fancy's children through  
The lapse of ages to  
The birth of worlds ; and through  
Immeasurable space beyond  
The bounds of imagery,  
Till we feel thy power,  
And realize our own  
Inferiority.

O God ! we feel thou art  
In everything.

Thou com'st  
To us in grief ; and thou  
Dost send thy spirits (parts  
Of Thee) to minister  
Unto our woes till healed  
By thy blest curative.  
Teach us to live, that, when  
Run down by death, our souls  
May find a resting-place  
In those eternal spheres  
Thou hast prepared. To go  
To be a part of thee,  
And with thee seek new truths,  
And act thy laws for aye.

## FOREST REVERIE.\*

July 18—August 6.

“ There is a pleasure in the pathless wood,  
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,  
There is society where none intrude,  
By the deep sea, and music in its roar.  
I love not man the less, but Nature more,  
From these our interviews, in which I steal  
From all I may be, or have been before,  
To mingle with the universe, and feel  
What I can ne’er express, yet cannot all conceal.”

—BYRON.

HERE will I sit in this dim wood, and list  
Unto the merry notes that greet mine ear ;  
Notes of the songsters, in such gurgling glee  
That songs become a liquid melody,  
And flow, like silver streams, adown the sky.

---

\* This poem was suggested and composed, in part, during one of my solitary rambles through the wood. The surroundings were remarkably striking, and so prompted me to write, and “Forest Reverie” is the product. It is an exact portraiture of the scene, with the exception of the cot described in the course of the poem, which is thoroughly imaginary.—AUTHOR.

Huge trees send up their growth, and pierce  
the vault

Of God's vast canopy, and hide the rays  
Of that orbed flambeau,—shading me here,  
and thus

Making my sojourn sweet and free from care.  
Now steals the breeze, which finds its welcome  
way

To my delightful resting-place upon  
This venerable log, felled by some laboring  
swain

Long, long ago ; for mouldering now it lies  
Deep in decay, surrendering up its growth  
Unto the elements. Ah ! such is life.  
Man comes into the world, exists a time,  
Then by the inevitable Death is stricken down,  
To moulder in the sands. There let him  
rest,

But speed his soul to fairer climes than ours !  
Hard by, the placid stream, kissed by the  
breeze,

Hastens to greet its guest, then ripples on  
O'er stones and crags, and through its winding  
path,

Beset with verdure. Many a rustic bridge

Doth span the course, but sometimes rudely  
thrown  
Into its bed, to check its favorite course.  
But hasten on, thou child of earth and air,  
And cease not till thou reach'st thy destiny.

My God is here. (The wood was God's first  
shrine.)

The trees attest His presence, and the wind  
Breathes out to me a message of His love.

Say, what is this that I doth now discern  
Far in the distant maze, surrounded by  
The wood, and so made indistinct  
By stalwart trunks, which intercept the range  
Of vision. Now the sturdy oak in majesty  
Doth rise and mock me fearlessly and bold.  
The beech, birch, maple, each in turn appear  
To serve that end, and last the spreading elm  
Steals into view ; then, sending itself abroad,  
It forms a vast corona,—strives to hide  
The cot beneath, but strives and strives in  
vain.

I now advance, and slowly through the depths  
Of trackless forestry doth stir my feet ;

Slowly and carefully, as did the child  
Of Christ along the rugged mountain-path  
When searching for the “end” in Christian  
life.\*

Onward I press, and soon the enchanting bower  
Receives my wearied form and gives me rest.  
The ruined walk, the great elm-tree above,  
The universe of wood, the flowery dale,  
The grasses and the ivy creeping o'er  
The crumbling wall, and o'er the tottering  
thatch,  
Afford a pleasing scene and noble † thoughts.  
I rest secure, as, casting a thoughtful glance,

---

\* An allusion to Christian in Bunyan's “Pilgrim's Progress.”

† It was first suggested to my mind to place “idle” here, but I did not wish to convey this to my readers. It is a wrong idea. I did not proceed to the wood to waste the time in idleness, but for thought; to pamper the soul with the lessons and truths of our beneficent mother. Some people have the opinion that one is “lazy” if he does not employ himself in hard, manual labor. Study and thought are considered idleness. But this we know is simply the height of ignorance. These are the sentiments of people who do not think, and are not to be considered by thinking people.—AUTHOR.

The sight soon falls upon the countless leaves.  
Attached, I pause awhile, then murmur thus,—  
“The leaves were born last spring, but to  
decay

The zephyrs now doth kiss them wantonly ;  
Full soon November turns their shroud to gold,  
And icy winter covers them with snow.

O Winter ! Why dost thou come here ?  
On thy approach in this our northern home  
I sooth would part with thee for fairer climes,  
Where queenly Summer ever reigns supreme,  
And o'er the teeming earth her mantle throws.  
But here the lot forbids me to remain.\*  
Give me the live metropolis of the north,  
The thriving town, and genial farms around.  
Though cold the blast and chill the atmosphere,  
'Tis past in time, and June again returns ;  
The birds, the trees, the meadows then appear,  
Our mother, Nature, smiles, then dons her best.”  
Now, strolling from the leaves to other sights,

---

\* The climate of the torrid zone has a natural tendency to produce unthriftiness. Life seems to be sluggish. There is not the thrift here that occurs in the north.—  
AUTHOR.

My thoughts run backward through the lapse  
of time

To when this wood was wrought with God's  
own hand ;

How, long ago, those cliffs of iceland\* sought  
To strew the land with rustic terraces ;  
To leave their traces in the rising hills.

Here the warm sun sent forth his torrid rays  
And bade the pompous heights yield at his will.  
So yielded thus the cliffs of adamant ;  
Thus caused a raging sea o'er all our land.

---

\* Reference to the Glacial Period. Steele, in a treatise on the Glacial Epoch, carries our fancy so far in the following lines that we imagine we are gazing on the scene itself :

“ The valleys are filled with broad, deep, majestic rivers, whose waters, flowing to the sea, dig deep channels, open new routes to the ocean, plough through mountain ridges, sort and sift the drift *débris*, arranging it in layers and forming alluvial deposits of a great thickness. In many parts of the Northern States only the loftiest mountains emerge above the engulfing waters. Billows roll where birds sang and flowers bloomed. The land gained during all these ages of geological history seems lost again. The ocean triumphs, and once more the Gulf joins its waters with the Arctic Ocean.”

Majestic streams gushed forth, and through  
the vale

The darkling waters rolled their billows high.  
Here, where I sit, huge monsters of the deep  
Once grovelled in the sands where rest my feet.  
Here once the mammoth and the mastodon  
Roamed through the wild with undivided sway;  
The cave-bear slyly trod in quest of food.  
But all are fled ; yes, all are buried now  
Far in the deep-delved earth,—their clods as  
rock.

The soil on which I rest is not the soil  
Which then received their footprints,—Father  
Time

Has placed a strata 'twixt their bones and me  
Which ne'er shall be removed unless, per-  
chance,

Some dire convulsion of the Stygian hells  
Shall rend its concrete structure to the winds.  
Ah ! such has been the case when into form  
God moulded first the plastic crust to grace  
A sphere of life. Three kingdoms\* then up-  
rose,

---

\* The mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms.

And soon a fourth,—the heavenly kingdom  
'twas.

And what is Life? 'Tis but a stage on which  
We all are actors, but a play to please  
The sight of Him who made it to destroy.  
Orders and kingdoms rise and fall with laws  
Of evolution and environments.

We learn through Science many laws of God,—  
How first, from certain vap'rous elements,  
A single cell is formed by synthesis,  
Then, being nurtured by apt elements,  
At last is graced an insect, flower, or man.  
Thus through the ages beings lived and died,  
Each giving place in turn to higher forms,  
And lastly man. Here the rude savage  
roamed,

And once possessed the pleasure of the wood.  
The deer, the elk, the bear fell at his will.  
But he is gone, oppressed by English blood.  
Where were his blest retreats not long ago  
The crowded city mocks his useless toil;  
Great breadths of masonry obscure the spot  
Where once he sat in council, as the flash  
Of war rushed through his poor yet active  
brain.

Oh, blest the change ! And honor to the men  
Who dared to brave the perils of the deep,  
Who dared to face the red-skin's poison dart,  
Who civilized our far-famed hemisphere,  
Who made the atrocious copper to submit.  
Oh, noble fathers of America,  
Thou gav'st to us our freedom and our tongue.  
How can we thank thee other than by use  
Of these, the boons which thou hast granted  
us ?

America, our home, we reverence thee.  
The vaulted roofs of heaven roll the sound  
Of anthems back to greet our patriot hearts.  
Thy fame transcends the glory of the east  
When morning first ascends the golden sky,  
When first she unfolds her robes and sends a  
flood  
Of light to wake the slumbering maidens fair.  
What lusty statesmen hast thou wrought !  
What wealth,  
What wisdom, what prosperity thou hast !  
But, oh, what vice ! Canst thou not comprehend ?  
Canst thou not fling this monster from thy  
bounds ?

Canst thou not soon efface his tarnished name?  
Oh, why dost thou remain, Illiteracy,  
To rob the nation and its tender youth?  
Art thou so stupid none can teach thee, say?  
Get hence; we care not for thy company.  
But, Wisdom, come; proclaim thy presence  
here;  
We'll sing thy praise in many a musèd rhyme.  
Let Ignorance be bound with manly steel,  
And cast her worthless body to the past.  
The past! 'Tis gone; nor could we wish it  
back.  
The future's in our sight, and lo, behold!  
The superior light shines indistinct before.

I watch the merry birds dart to and fro  
From bough to bough, contented and in peace.  
Let none disturb their fare. But as they move  
At evening to the streets, "the fowler's eye"  
Detects their presence; then his skill pours out  
Their life-blood o'er a God-created breast.  
Has man a heart? If so, 'tis but a stone  
When its true language tells the soul to kill.  
Does he "ne'er think what wondrous beings  
these"?

Does he “ne’er think who made them and  
who taught  
The dialect they speak”? Man has a soul,  
But ’tis a brute’s when ’t fells an innocent bird.

A wandering sunbeam comes to tell to me  
That ’tis the hour of noon ; but where’s my  
food ?

I look in vain about me. Pleasant the cot,  
Pleasant this flowery nest, but not to starve.\*  
“If solitude makes scant the means of life,”  
Our souls must seek a sustenance elsewhere.  
Hence I will hie me homeward to my lodge.  
The wood is rude,†—exempt from public strife,  
From clang ing hammers and the roar of  
wheels.

God’s pristine handiwork stands undisturbed,‡  
The same keen charm now marks it as of yore.  
Man clears the forest, but the stroke forbade,  
Which strikes the shrine from off the smiling  
earth.

---

\* Meaning, not pleasant to starve.

† But is omitted here.

‡ The wood still stands in places with the same charm  
and wildness as in earlier times.

Give me the city, but let not the wood  
Be stricken from our clods' indulgences.  
Yet, oh, for the city's walls, its burnished  
wealth,  
Its culture, and its high society.  
Here wisdom thrives, but we would ask for  
more.  
Welcome the time when we'll no longer place  
Upon the tombstone of some mouldering  
youth,—  
“Fair Science frowned not on his humble  
birth.”  
“My visit still, but never my abode,”  
The cot has left its trace upon the soul.

## TO HER MATERNAL GRACE.

How oft in childhood's dark and weary hours  
Has thy soft hand been laid upon my brow.  
It seemed as if with supernatural power  
To comfort me, and sympathy embower.  
No balm, however sweet, can be compared  
With this one. Nay, 't absconds into the depths  
    Of sheer defeat.  
A loss of thee can never be repaired.

THE END.

















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